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Dear Dr. Lederberg:

I owe you a profound apology for our long silence since your letter of November 12. Actually we have spent a good deal of time with your article, and it has not been until now that I could really answer the letter.

I would not worry about the fact that we have paid for the article without publishing it. We did, after all, ask you to write the article, and it would seem only fair that we kept our part of the bargain.

As you have guessed, the article presents us with something of a problem. In our opinion the problem resides in the material rather than your handling of it. There are some advances in science that are more difficult to explain than others. In the past we have felt obliged to publish such explanations in spite of their difficulty. As time passes, however, we have come closer to the conclusion that, when a subject seems primarily of a technical nature, we might better devote our space to other things.

Now you might well say that you could rework the article in such a way that it would be less technical. We can appreciate, however, that you have already made a considerable effort in this direction. We are pessimistic that the subject can be made much easier without doing violence to the content, and we are thus reluctant to ask you to try again.

So to clear the air I shall say that we do not plan to publish the article. It was nonetheless inevitable that we ask you to write it. It is just that, in our ignorance, we were unable to predict how difficult it would be to achieve what we wanted. If you should desire to publish the article elsewhere, we would of course have no objection.

Cordially,

Dennis Flanagan

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Editor

DF:ap

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